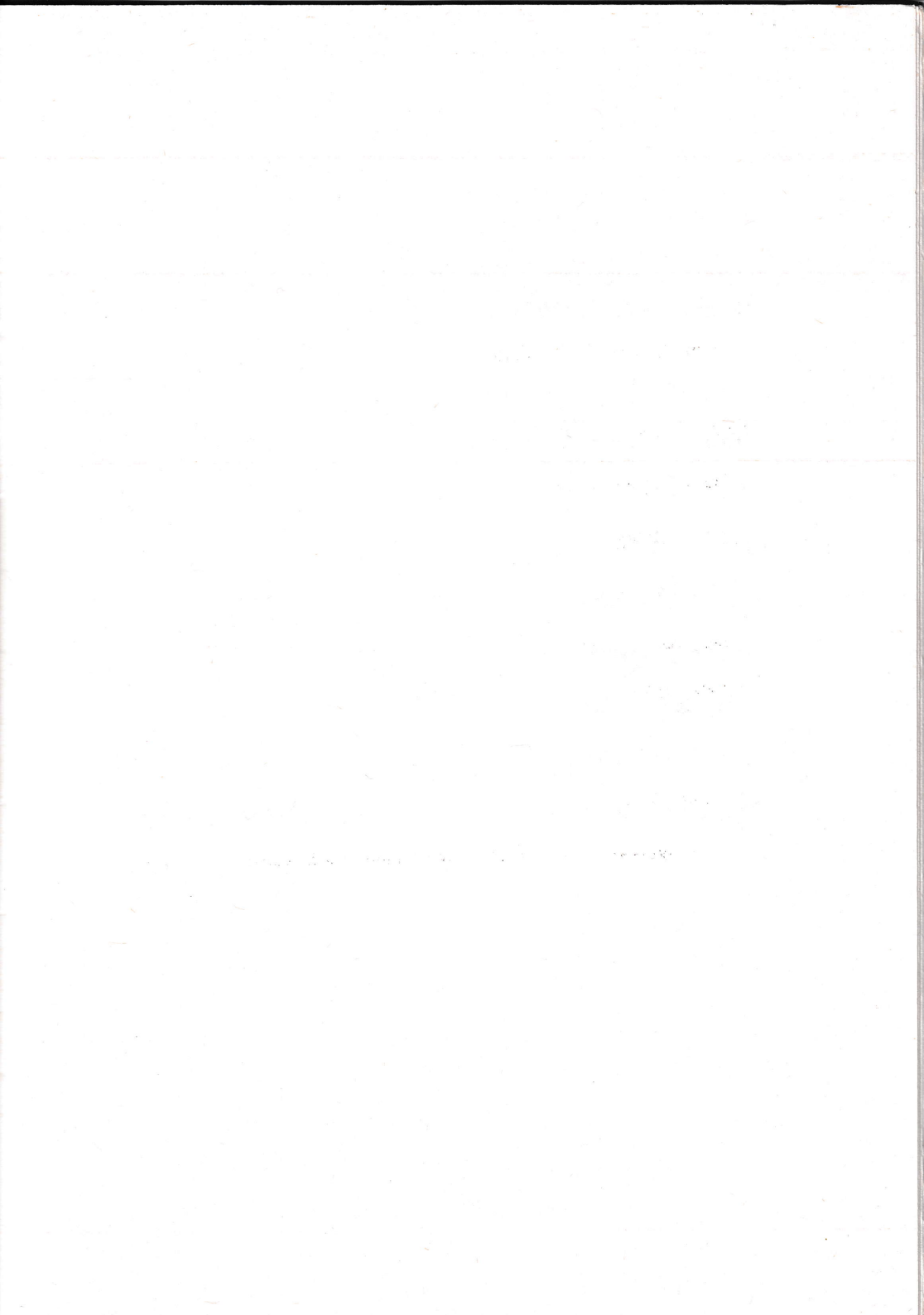


A SYMPHONY OF

FREE



SHAKESPEAREAN PEANUTS



Contributors To This Volume

Kylie Turner

Johanna Forrester

Claire Mclisky

Kristen Sobels

Lesley-Anne Bienke

Kristiane Greville

Ann-Marie Denham

Elizabeth Kassab

Improvised poem with Gavin Loughton and Mark Kassab

The Gift

When it's all quiet,
when my youth has gone,
when my eyes are dim
And my countenance tired,
I'll give you the only gift
That I'll have left.
I've kept it as safe
As I possibly could.
Shielded from the outside.

Deflected the pains from it.
I've treasured it dearly.
I hope you'll do the same.
But even if you don't,
if you trample it
Down into the dust,
I will not cry out,
for I will be gone.
It will be my goodbye
To you at the end.
It is precious indeed,
for the gift I'll give you
will be the gift of my heart.

6:15pm 21 may 1992
Ann-Marie Denham

Insanity

scream
yell
tear it apart.
looks that could kill
but never smile, it may hurt.

5:40pm 27 May 1992
Elizabeth Kassab

Lost

She's not profoundly attractive
her features are strained and lined
they once showed a beauty and character
but now that's all lost....

In reminise she sees her life
her childhood seems so distracted;
she knows those loving times
are gone,
forever lost....

He's out,
She wonder's what his lover is like,
would he do the same to his mistress?
She still feels the pain
from those nights
..hopefully lost...

The child comes before her,
but, in these emotions she is held.
Gently she holds her child
rocking with sweet love
harmoniously she sings her lullaby,
but the true meaning of those words
was lost...

Flickers of light jump across them
the cloud passes slowly-
unhappy to give it back the sun,
but now it is night and the
sun is lost...

It's now that here,
with all light gone
and silence all but missing,
that in the evening's serenity
she's all but alone,
in her lifetime where
all is lost...

Johanna Forrester

The Vision

I had a vision
of what could be?
of what might be?
of what isn't!!

Oh!
and what a vision it was.
It was unbelievable.
Inexpressible
Unimaginable.

Smiles were a plenty as grains of sand.
The sun shone breathtaking brilliance.
Light
serene yet bright,
filled every possible corner
so that even the shadows glowed with vibrance.
Everyone's presence was known and felt
Really felt
as if all were one,
not just superficial
shallow noise.

Harmony, peace and contentment
reigned monarch overall.
Controlling and ruling its subjects-
love and happiness.

It was so that
Even the animals understood this ruling
and all lived in unity.

The raised voices pierce my subconsciousness,
and reality intrudes
with its full force.

I remember
and keep this hope of the vision
close to my heart.
Willing the world
to meet the expectations
of this foresight.

Each day
I recall this indefinable experience to my mind
to work towards this vision.

Kylie Turner

Poem 1

Cold prince of darkness he seemed,
She dreamed,
when the rain fell like hail on the roof.

Warm prince of light, he seemed, as he beamed,
She dreamed
when the wind whipped a gale round the roof.

Ice prince of hell, he seemed...
She screamed,
but she didn't dream,
no, not anymore.

He came at night,
only nights when the moon was
a patch of black in the sky,
but she didn't cry,
no, not anymore

She lived for his face,
his body, his soul
in his presence she was fulfilled,
but not by love, that didn't fulfill her,
no, not anymore.

Claire Mclisky

A Theory of Existence

The death in life surrounds my moods,
controls my moves,
and taints my essence.
The life in death enriches my thoughts,
enfolds my heart,
and counts my blessings.
The death is hate.
The life is love.
And neither can exist alone.

Kristiane Greville.

Reality

Life is equal to death
How one asks!
Life is death and death is life.

The soul is risen
it is free to do as it pleases.

Yet in life the soul
is in cage, it can only
say and do so much.

My sanctuary is my four
walls, walls that have
seen and heard everything.

If one was to have a
conversation with my wall, my
wall could tell you strange things.

So please whisper my four
walls because there are
eyes and ears everywhere.

18 February 1992
Elizabeth Kassab

Shadows of the Night

You touched me from deep within.
I couldn't help but feel it
the warmth of your caress
Soothed my heart and touched my soul.
Your eyes so gentle and soft
I felt see-through.
We both became ardent shadows of the night.
With your arms around me secure,
In a world of darkness we became one.
The waves pulse whispered sweet nothings to
the shadows dancing on the shore
Sweet nothings past my mind
But not my lips.
Being with you said enough.
But let me hear you speaking just for me.

Kristen Sobels

Love

Love can be a crushing feeling
of meted rocks.
Love can also be the sweet
scent of a rose.

Love can sometimes be the
bitter taste of poison
or the lingering sweetness
of sugar.

Love can be genuinely returned
or bitterly rejected.
So how can love be so
gingerly different?
Love can be a rude awakening
to the most pleasant dream.
Love is a special feeling the one
I enjoy but dread to live.

Lesley-Anne Bienke

Poem 2

She sees the light at the end of the tunnel,
and returning truth's cold, hard stare.
She knows she must go on,
"Thy kingdom come"

The words echo through her young mind,
fears' icy fingers creep down her spine,
"Thou wilt be mine."

A strange, imposing voice sings in her head
"You didn't earn your daily bread, now you shall be led."

To the dark kingdom you dreamed about,
all those lonely nights you heard me shout.

"Come to me, oh sweet princess of light,
I know your plight, you know I'm right."

But why did you stay,
each day an extra burden,
and come what may, you carried the weight.

Of a thousand tons of lead, and your flesh was licked,
by the fires of hell,
its just as well.

Claire McLisky

Secrecy

Wanting to reveal herself.
But the fear of being found
The other side wants to be seen
but under standing she cannot find,
laughter should not be heard.
She would only turn and run.
If understanding you do not find,
At least hold her in your heart
and tell her you still care.

Kristen Sobels

Lovers

Together on the beach they sat
a loving, constant, perfect match
no words exchanged
nor a move to see
so pleasant was the company
whilst music inaudible yet divine
shrouded the silhouettes
in diminishing light.

A maxime from the best of men
was without the capacity to comprehend them
that trinity and human love
could encompass the...evil of
greed or shedded blood.

Without intent the love they shared
diminished some of our
world's fear
thus all the sorrows we impart
are rectified by loving hearts.

Johanna Forrester

This is an extract from Good To Be Alive, Great To Be Dead.

CHAPTER ONE

This story takes place in England.

Night had just fallen over a small suburban town in the south. A dog's incessant barking split the cold, bitter air, causing a voice to swear angrily at it. The dog took no notice and proceeded to knock over a whole line of dustbins as it rampaged along the pavement.

Inside one of the houses along the street floated an open copy of The Financial Times. It was positioned roughly ten feet in front of the television and three inches in front of the fuzzy, navy blue sofa. The television displayed a live soccer match and a sudden roar of noise made it apparent that a goal had just been scored.

The scoring team were all jumping in the air like gazelles and rolling over into a pile of bodies, beneath which lay the goal-scorer. Despite getting chronically squashed by his team mates, he was grinning madly like a lunatic being assaulted with a large feather.

The Financial Times rattled its pages disapprovingly.

Upstairs, someone was shouting.

"Zachariah? Zachariah!"

The seventeen-year-old sprawled in front of the television frowned and turned the volume up. It proved too loud for The Financial Times so it rattled for attention.

"Please turn it down. I am not a half-deaf geriatric and neither are you."

The voice from upstairs shouted again.

"Zachariah, you get up these stairs or I'll beat you to within an inch of your life!"

Zack sighed. It sounded like his mother was not pleased with the state of his room again. He couldn't understand what was wrong having clothes, records, books and used tissues all over the floor. His mother, however, had different ideas on this matter.

"The television's all yours now, sis'," he announced.

"Mum's giving me grief about my room." He exited, picking his nose thoughtfully.

The Financial Times closed its pages, folded neatly and was placed in the magazine rack next to the fuzzy, navy blue sofa. FT picked up the remote control and flicked from channel to channel. Judging by the quality of the

programmes showing that evening, she had little hope for any worthy entertainment. She went back to the soccer and settled for watching men's legs. She spotted a particularly fine pair and sat captivated for the rest of the match.

FT had just turned sixteen the previous month. To her, being sixteen felt exactly the same as being fifteen: frustrating and being only five foot three for the second year so far. Her brother's height of six foot one didn't help either. She had frosty white hair that was in stark contrast to her jet black eyebrows. People often wondered whether she bleached her hair, much to her irritation. Her emerald green eyes never missed a trick, even though she looked half-asleep most of the time. Her sullen pout made her seem uncompromising and surly to those who didn't know her that well. She had a strange sense of humour and tended to be rather rude and tactless to those she considered as "idiots who make time-wasting comments". Her real name was Sybil, much to her disgust. She became known as FT for her early interest in The Financial Times which she would sit and study for up to two hours or more. Her mother said that it was not what she should be doing at her age.

"You should be out with your friends," Celestine would shrill at her daughter.

"I have no desire to spend my evenings down at the local disco waving my arms about while naff dance music implodes my ear drums, thank you very much," FT would reply. "Very bland and not my idea of a fun time."

The main reason that FT would hide behind her newspaper was because it tended to nullify dull conversations about how her schoolwork was going, why she wasn't out with her friends, why she hadn't got a boyfriend yet, and comments about Gorbit's behaviour.

Gorbit was FT's pet rat that she had managed to smuggle out of the school biology lab the previous year. He had been due for dissection that week which somewhat distressed FT. Fortunately, the biology teacher was summoned to the headmaster's office regarding an incident involving a sheep's kidney and a stray lump of intestine that had found their way into the secretary's filing cabinet. This had allowed FT to snatch Gorbit from his small cage and stuff him in her pocket. She'd somehow managed to get him home without being discovered. At first, Celestine was none too elated about having a rat in the house, but she changed her mind when Gorbit put on a very miserable expression at the thought of going back to the lab. Since then, he had become a member of the

family, spoilt by everyone and loving every minute of it. Often he would sit on FT's shoulder and this tended to draw curious glances when FT was in the shopping centre. She would let any brave person who asked about Gorbit to pat him and the rat would revel in the attention. He always wanted to be a celebrity.

As FT stared at the television, Gorbit scuttled into the room and began to scratch about in one of the pot plants, spraying dirt all over the carpet.

At that point the doorbell rang. FT got up and shuffled into the hallway. She pulled the front door open and was faced with a boy of about nineteen, propped up against the door-frame. Well, at least it wasn't a Jehovah's Witness.

"Yes?" she asked in a flat tone. "If you've come to sell me something, I don't want it, and if you've come to save me from the Devil, you're too late." She frowned when she thought she heard someone laughing close by. She gathered that it was her imagination. "Please state your purpose in five words or less."

The boy stared back at her. He scratched his left ear and said: "Do you bleach your hair?"

FT blinked. "No," she answered calmly, and slammed the door in his face.

"Who was that?" her mother called from the top of the stairs. She had just heard the door slam and wondered what had happened. "Was it a Jehovah's Witness?"

"No, just a rude commoner," FT replied, going back to the television.

Jann-Marie Denham

Untitled

The dark stillness clung to me like satin.
As I ran blindly towards the voice I couldn't hear.
Echo's in my mind explained the unspoken chant.
As I tripped and fell over thoughts and words.
Challenges slapped me in the face rippling
the darkness as a pebble in the pond.
And I was still.

I was spinning but could see nothing.
Hovering in nothingness I felt the
unspoken command.
Spasmodically, I lurched in what direction
only my watcher knows.
He was one yet I could feel his presence
surrounding, suffocating me.
Like he had devoured me and was dissolving my soul.

Another slap, I disregarded the pain with a shrug.
Then a false step or an incorrect interpretation
sent me hurtling down an endless shaft.
Another dream forgotten in the mind of the obsessed.

Kristiane Greville

Eternity

"Stay"
But they never listen.
"Life is so fragile"
But they do not hear.
"Come with me I'll show you."
But they close their eyes
"Talk and be listened to."
But mouths are closed.
"Stop"
But they keep on going.
"Goodbye."
But they never wave.

Elizabeth Kassab

Poem 5

Twisted, gnarled trunks
hide the horrible truth
from we, who are just mere mortals.

The faces they hide
They are screaming inside
Their grotesque mouths emit sarcastic chortles

Their features disfigured,
one stab sent to trigger
a chorus of voices untamed.

The axeman, his fate
his death just a date
in a sea of conspirators un-named

For revenge of the trees
the butterflies and bees
is not just an if, but a when

So long they have toiled,
Their great riches soiled
by mere mortals, again and again.

Claire McIskey

Another Day

Crystal tears fall,
And so does the sun.
Another day of harshwords and silence,
Another day of hardwork and despair
The close of yet another day,
Another day of yesterday.

Kristen Sobels

Hope Is Never Truly Lost

Hope is never truly lost,
It only seems that way at times.
When you seem to fall down,
down,
deeper and deeper,
into a mist
of depression
enveloping and suffocating
your entire existence.

Then suddenly,
the mist begins to clear
And the sun
shines through,
closing you,
in its radiating warmth.
You now feel as if you can go on
realizing that life
still continues,
with or without you,
either way, the earth still turns.

The earth still turns
as it has done
throughout the ages
and will continue doing so
for future generations
unfailing,
unfaltering,
neverending.

Hope is now once again
a part of your life,
and you realize that
it was never truly lost.

Kylie Turner

Illusions

Only a voice.
Interrupting the silence; wanting to be heard.
A vague mystified image appeared from the haze.
Searching for help, reaching for hope.
I stood. Motionless.
My voice of reality beckoned its presence.
The figure cringed in an emotional world of its own.
Hoplessness was portrayed in its desperate face.
The haze thinned; the figure was slowly revealed.
To my disbelief, the image was my future.

Kristen Sobels

As soon as you love
they leave
when you pour your heart and soul
they leave
When you want them to stay and be with you
they leave
when you cry out for them
they leave.

So you decide to leave yourself and no longer
call after them. What happens?
they stay.
They stay when you don't want them to stay
and they leave when you don't want them to leave.

What is the solution?

**6:30pm 4 May 1992
Elizabeth Kassab**

Old Age

It's sad to see the ageing process
it sort of makes you wonder
why it happens.

Why is it necessary for wrinkles,
grey hair frowns and dirty
night gowns?

Why is it necessary for the social
slip, and the horrid memory lapses.

Why is it that old people
are stashed away,
out of sight
to be forgotten for numerous
nights.

Then one day, the sad end comes,
and the family reunites
only for the gloomy occasion.

So then why is ageing necessary?

It's ugly, forgetful, sad and worst of
all for the elderly-
degrading of their past built pride.
Ageing, I wonder why.

Lesley-Anne Bienke

If.....

If I'd looked away
I might never have seen...
If I'd blocked my ears
I might never have heard...
If I'd closed my heart
I might never have felt...
If I'd suppressed my soul
I might never have loved...
...you.

7:12am 1 May 1992
Ann-Marie Denham

Untouchable

I can't see you from afar.
But it doesn't matter
Because I only need to feel
That you are there.

The moment is lost in the past.
I just recall that I was young
When I saw your face, and
I wondered who you really were.

You disappeared for several years,
But really you were always there.
The memory didn't fade.
It was only misplaced somewhere

When you reappeared, that was when
It started to happen.
It was when I began to realise
How I'd always felt about you.

Maybe one day I'll get the chance
To ask you if you are
Who you say you are,
Or if you're who I think you are.

For how can someone look
As heavenly as you,
As devilish as you,
And still be human?

Perhaps the question is not meant
To be asked or answered.
But for now I might
Sit and think about it.

What cuts the most is
How you'd never be interested
The way I'd hope.
Or is that another one of your tricks?

I should let it go
And look elsewhere.
But how can I erase that
Which is etched in my mind?

Do you weave the spell
Just to torture me?
Or don't you know that
You're tearing a soul in twain?

9:04pm 28 April 1992
Ann-Marie Denham

The Greek God Bod (improvised group poem)

**The heat of your words melt my ice eyes
and like tears they rundown my face.**

**Confusion in life is often best
for when we know, we lose.**

**The mists of time are better not disturbed,
as what one finds cannot be erased from ones memory.**

Naked in fluorescent light.

Empty night, heartless sun.

**My brain goes bouncing along the pavement
Excuse me as my eyes explode into the stratosphere.**

**Beach at sunset, then dawn is near
tomorrow's day soon will be here.**

**Analysing and enjoying the company I am
now exposed to yet however unacceptable
I think of my befriended greek God bod.**

**As you sit there, I wonder if you've
been to the toilet today? No not you Mark.**

Arnold

The wind is tossing the leaves
Grey, green, grey, green.
Future dreams will never last
When you find yourself living in the past.
The dew drop winked
In the dawns cool grace.
The grass reached up to touch the leaves.
My actions are trapped
By the reality of life.
As I tried to reach beyond reality
I find myself unable to up yeah, that's right.
Assembly of thoughts
in the congress of crickets.
As gently as a symphony
of the flying butterflies
Here ends the music.

Our thanks must go to Miss. S. J. Horner (Head of Faculty of Literature and Languages) and Mrs.T.Pride (Senior School Mistress) for their financial support for our enterprise, and Mrs.James for allowing us to proceed with our Writers' Society.

Special thanks must go to Mrs.Cooper,
Mrs.Wright and
Mrs.Graf

whose practical assistance has been invaluable.

We have gained a great deal of pleasure from the Writers' Society, from the girls of different ages and hope that what we've started may continue. We intrust this to our successors.

Gavin Loughton and Mark Kassab visited us on several occasions and they may have inspired some of our more extreme pieces.

Our gratitude must be given to Mrs. T. Pride, whose unfailing support aided us in our various trials. Without her our Writers' Society would have been failing in the literary desert.

Ann-Marie Denham designed the cover and I have edited the book.
Thank You to everyone!

Elizabeth Kassab

Editor

